

## **CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** City Commission  
**FROM:** Amy Leon, City Manager; Todd Larson, Director of Parks and Recreation;  
Luke Youmans, Aquatics, Recreation, City Events Manager  
**RE:** Music at the Meridian and Special Events  
**Date:** January 20, 2023

### **Music at the Meridian**

Music at the Meridian has become increasingly more popular each year. Over the years some small changes have been made to the event. As we continue to grow and improve, we are curious about the City Commission's thoughts on a number of items we have discussed as staff.

#### **Beverage Sales**

Commission question to consider:

#### **Should the Music at the Meridian event look to formalize the process for providers for beverage sales?**

We have been approached by a local proprietor to be the exclusive provider of beverages for the event. This would be a marketing opportunity for the vendor and could provide the City with some benefits as well. Other communities and special events often have an "official beer of" the specific event. Ideas could include a fee for the exclusive rights or a fee in combination with other terms such as a special beer to be brewed for the event. A percentage of sales revenue could also be a consideration.

If this is something the Commission is interested in, we would likely put together an RFP and see what ideas surface. Any formal agreement would require action from the City Commission.

#### **Food Sales**

Commission question to consider:

#### **Should the Music at the Meridian event look to formalize the process for providers for sales of food?**

Currently there are no fees in place for any vendor at our event. 100% of profits and proceeds go directly to our vendors. We are interested in your feedback regarding whether the city should charge a permitting fee or a percentage of sales for the vendors. It would be nice for planning purposes to have a set schedule of who is coming on which evenings. We also believe this could cut down on periodic cancellations that we have experienced.

If this is appealing to the City Commission an RFP would likely be the best scenario for securing vendors. This would also allow us to limit the number of vendors and select vendors we believe would be popular to the audience. Any formal agreement would require action from the City Commission.

## **Upgrades to “The Lawn”**

Commission question to consider:

**What upgrades to the current space could make “The Lawn” a better site for Music at the Meridian and other events?** This could include both infrastructure and amenities.

Staff would like you to think about this and discuss it with the community. Upgrades and changes to “The Lawn” are probably going to be a result of a larger planning and capital budgeting discussion. Electrical upgrades and some additional accessible parking might be good first start. The larger consideration, however, is whether this will be a permanent event and open space, or does the community have a different vision long term?

## **Special Events**

Commission questions to consider:

**Is the Commission comfortable with making changes to the special events application, policies, and practices?**

City staff would like to see a number of changes in the special events application. First, staff suggests that the fee for the special events application increase. Currently we have a \$25.00 fee for special events. The fee is based on when the application is received and increases the closer on the calendar to the event.

Yankton is one of the few communities that does not charge for labor and equipment associated with events. Staff will provide some examples from similar communities relating to the fees they request.

If fees are appropriate, staff recommends fees collected be set aside into a reserved fund account for replacement of things like our bleachers, picnic tables, etc. Overtime moving this type of equipment does create damage and eventually these will need to be replaced. With a limited budget each year in Parks Capital, it might be good planning to have a fund available for replacement of equipment.

We currently do not establish ADA requirements in our special events application. We believe this is necessary.

We currently do not require proof of liability insurance for the special event. Staff suggest we require proof of liability insurance for the event itself and set a minimum amount of required liability insurance. Staff will provide some ranges that other communities set at the work session.

Staff suggests that event organizers find private vendors for garbage and recycling, electrical upgrades/service, and tables/chairs (other than picnic tables) like the requirement for special events to have their own port-a-potty vendor.

We currently trust our event organizers to inform all abutting property owners of street closures. This is sometimes not as successful as we would like it to be. We recommend that the application require the event organizer to publish the street closure in the Press & Dakotan and post it to the event website or Facebook Page.

We have continued to have more requests for police presence at events. Examples of this would be a parade requiring police escort or walk-throughs at music events. In recent years our police department has been strained to cover patrol and all of the “extra” duties associated with events. Staff availability is also an issue. Staff recommends that we work with Chief Foote to determine a fee for support like traffic control, crowd roving, and parade escort, and charge the event accordingly. If YPD is unavailable, we suggest the event provides its own security.

### **Summary**

Staff is evaluating how other communities are handling these types of questions and will bring some examples to you to help guide discussion. Once we have your thoughts and comments on these areas, we will draft associated documents accordingly. Fees would be set by resolution. Exclusive agreements with vendors/operators would also ultimately need to be approved through Commission action. With the number of changes and details in the Special Events Application being proposed, this is also something we would like for you to act on at a public meeting.

We understand that these are big discussions and event season is quickly approaching.

If the Commission would like, changes could be implemented in 2024. A committee of 2-3 Commissioners and staff could be developed to bring back the recommendations to the full body.